

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 13475

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR EG UR IS XF
SUBJECT: SOVIET INTEREST IN STATUS OF PEACE PROCESS

SUMMARY. SOVIET EMBOFF CLAIMS PEACE PROCESS STALLED, U.S. STILL MEDIATOR, DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES ABANDONED AND SADAT PROPOSAL FOR TURNOVER OF WEST BANK AND GAZA OPENS WAY FOR NEW EGYPTIAN CONCESSIONS. HE PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN KNOWING IF U.S., WITH SADAT AGREEMENT, HAD SET ASIDE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES (DENIED BY POLCOUNS), WHAT PROPOSALS U.S. HAD GIVEN BEGIN AND WHAT NEXT STEPS WOULD BE. HYPOTHESIS HE CHECKING OUT SEEMED TO BE U.S. LETTING SADAT DOWN AND RETURN TO ARAB FOLD NOW A POSSIBILITY. END SUMMARY.

1. SOVIET COUNSELOR OLEG DERKOVSKY CALLED ON POLCOUNS MAY 23 AT HIS REQUEST FOR APPOINTMENT SAME DAY. DERKOVSKY SAID HE WISHED DISCUSS CURRENT STATUS OF PEACE PROCESS IN LIGHT OF ATHERTON'S ATLANTA AND DETROIT SPEECHES AND PRESIDENT SADAT'S RECENT PROPOSAL TO ANTHONY LEWIS. DERKOVSKY'S MAIN POINTS WERE (A) PROCESS IS STALEMATED; (B) U.S. STILL MEDIATOR, RATHER THAN PLAYING MORE ACTIVE ROLE FAVORED BY SADAT; (C) U.S. AND ISRAEL HAVE ABANDONED
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DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES IN FAVOR OF NEGOTIATING ON SPECIFIC PROPOSALS FOR WEST BANK AND GAZA; (D) SADAT'S PROPOSAL FOR TURNOVER OF WEST BANK AND GAZA TO JORDAN AND EGYPT INDICATES HE TOO WILLING ABANDON DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES; (E) SADAT TRYING BEST TO BE HELPFUL TO U.S.; NOT ONLY HAD HE ACCEPTED EVERYTHING CARTER HAD ASKED ON NORMAL RELATIONS, BUT HIS NEW PROPOSAL MAY

SIGNAL ADDITIONAL CONCESSIONS TO ISRAEL. FOR EXAMPLE, IT DOES NOT MENTION WHEN WITHDRAWAL WOULD TAKE PLACE, WHICH PRESUMABLY COULD MEAN IDF FORCES COULD REMAIN FOR UNSPECIFIED TIME ON WEST BANK AND GAZA.

2. DERKOVSKY WAS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN KNOWING WHETHER U.S. HAD SET ASIDE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES, WHAT SPECIFIC PROPOSALS OR IDEAS U.S. HAD GIVEN TO BEGIN AND DAYAN AND WHAT NEXT STEP IN PEACE PROCESS WOULD BE. POLCOUNS DENIED FIRST AND PLEADED IGNORANCE ON OTHER TWO COUNTS, AND SAID U.S. WOULD BE STRENUOUSLY CONTINUING EFFORTS TO MOVE PROCESS FORWARD. DERKOVSKY ALSO ASKED "HYPOTHETICAL" QUESTION OF WHAT U.S. WOULD DO IF SADAT ANNOUNCED TODAY IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE THAT PEACE PROCESS HAS FAILED AND HE IS RETURNING TO ARAB FOLD. HE CLAIMED GOE RESPONSE TO NUMAYRI MISSION HINTS OF SUCH POSSIBILITY. POLCOUNS SAID HE SAW NO EVIDENCE THAT SADAT HAD ANY INTENTION OF ABANDONING PEACE PROCESS AND, IN HIS PERSONAL VIEW, IF SADAT WERE TO SUGGEST ABANDONING IT, U.S. WOULD EXERT EVERY EFFORT TO DISSUADE HIM.

3. COMMENT. SINCE POLCOUNS HAD ONLY SEEN DERKOVSKY TWO DAYS AGO, IT IS CURIOUS THAT HE SOUGHT IMMEDIATE APPOINTMENT TO REVIEW STATUS OF PEACE PROCESS. HYPOTHESIS HE SEEMED TO BE CHECKING OUT WAS SADAT DOING HIS BEST, U.S. CONFIDENTIAL

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LETTING HIM DOWN GENTLY, AND EGYPT'S RETURN TO ARAB FOLD DISTINCT POSSIBILITY. MATTHEWS

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